

**ABSTRACT**

5 The present invention provides a means for an end user to  
customize a speech-based user interface, such as those  
used in status and control for such applications as  
messaging, unified communications, automobile control,  
and many others. The invention consists of two major  
10 components: a graphical configuration component, and a  
run-time component. The graphical configuration  
component allows a user to quickly and efficiently:  
specify the information they wish to be included in  
spoken summaries; restructure command menus or vocabulary  
15 structures to meet their personal requirements, moving  
commonly-used commands to the "top" of a hierarchy or  
vocabulary structure, and rarely-used commands to the  
bottom layers; create additional commands to access  
information relating to functions external to the system,  
20 e.g. access data from the web, or control another device  
or system, via the web; and save the customization for  
use by the run-time program. The run time program is  
embedded into the speech user interface module of the  
system, and effectively executes the customized speech  
25 based user interface. Some existing speech user  
interface modules may already be "data driven", thus  
providing an excellent foundation for implementing the  
invention.